

THE FACE OF ROSENTEL.

CHARLES HOWARD MORGAN.
THE PRINCE OF A REBELS.
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CHAPTER II. A HALT IN THE ROAD.

"You are an artist," said the man on the front seat of the sleigh, turning about that he might talk more easily with the young man who sat beside the pretty girl on the rear seat. "You are an artist. What do you think of the workmanship of this?"

He had taken from an inner pocket a small leather case, which he now passed to his companion. When the young man set brought to light the contents, he held in his hand a medallion, set in a jeweled frame—a medallion upon the convex surface of which was graven the attractive features of a handsome woman. The work was so delicate, the sitting so rich, the effect of the whole so exquisite that the artist involuntarily uttered a cry of pleasure.

"Why, this is really admirable, Lamar! Who is it? Where did you get it?"

"The man on the front seat answered in a voice as cold and unemotional as a voice could well be.

"Inasmuch as this is the woman whom I am to marry, I thought a tolerably fair counterfeiter of her face would be interesting to my friends."

"The pretty girl, who had been admiring the dainty valiant, became, as he spoke, somewhat pale.

"Oh," she said in a constrained, conventional way, "this is Mrs. Forsythe?"

"Mrs. Forsythe," assented the man on the front seat.

"She is very pretty," said the girl in the same tone.

As she spoke she put the medallion quickly into the hand of the young man who sat beside her and averted her head.

"Another choice," exclaimed the man on the front seat in a brisk tone, glancing at a fork in the white road which the feet horses were rapidly approaching. "Shall we take the inland road direct or go by the roundabout sea road? We shall see more life by the first way, but we shall have better sleighing and plenty of cold wind by the second. Which shall it be?"

"Which shall it be, Ellen?" repeated the young man to the pretty girl.

"It makes no difference to me."

"Then let us have the sea road and the sleighing. We are in no hurry, and a little cold won't hurt us."

"Facta est alia. The sea road it shall be."

The sleighing party was now within eight miles of the city, the location of which was marked by a vague glow in the wintry sky. Gradually the laughter had ceased and words had become infrequent. The bells on the horses jingled merrily as ever, and the rapid hoof beats on the hard crust came to the ear through the biting air in the same inspiring pulsations, but for all that it was cold riding after sundown along the sea road, with the bitter breath from the darkening ocean fall in the face.

Every moment the fences and hedges were becoming more indistinct, and the dreary white landscape between the observers and the fading streak in the horizon, where the sun had lately been, was rapidly losing all significance or intelligibility as a prospect. Truly Dr. Eustace Lamar had forgotten the fight of time in his enjoyment of the exhilarating sport, or he had sadly miscalculated the distance. Not that there was anything to be dreaded in the ordinary course of events of a ride in the pale twilight or under the mellow rays of the moon. The road was a good one, and very soon it would be well lighted. And if the three pleasure-seekers were a trifle cold they could console themselves with the comforting reflection that there was a cheerful fire waiting for them in the agreeable sitting room of the uppermost flat at 20 Ballawater place. It was not an elaborate affair, this abode of Julian Maxey, the artist, but it was a pleasant, interesting and certainly on a cold night like this a very comfortable and desirable place in which to be.

Perhaps it was not owing altogether to the cold that an unwonted silence had fallen upon the occupants of the sleigh. Pretty Ellen Maxey, the artist's sister, who sat beside her brother on the rear seat, had dealt a deathblow to the conversation when she ceased to take part in it. But she was not asleep, and her face, protected from view by abundant wraps and the growing obscurity, had gradually settled into an expression at once wistful, pathetic and resigned.

Maxey, whose power of observation was not wholly a matter of eyesight, had become annoyed and solicitous, but he took pains not to betray this fact.

As for philosophic, middle aged, handsome Dr. Lamar, the prime cause of the whole trouble, he was extremely unconscious of any unhappiness on the part of his friends. He sat bolt upright all by himself on the front seat, his hands busy with the reins and his attention apparently completely absorbed in scanning the road as far as he could see in front of his swift team. The truth is that Dr. Lamar had blunderingly and unwittingly touched upon a topic exceedingly disagreeable to his friends behind him when he mentioned his approaching marriage with the wealthy Widow Forsythe.

If Dr. Lamar had only known how fine and handsome he appeared in his pretty neighbor's eyes, it would have astonished him a great deal, and he would have been henceforth very much more discreet in his remarks. If pretty Ellen Maxey had imagined how well her keen and penetrating brother had guessed her secret, undoubtedly she would have dissimulated a great deal of gloom and merriment in a despairing endeavor to have thrown him off the scent, for the heart beats peevishly in the breast of a girl like her, and this was such a secret as she would wish might die with her.

"They were all young. The doctor was the eldest, and he had barely reached 40. He was a brilliant young man who had made something of a name in the medical world by a recent remarkable publication, and whose practice was already established on a firm basis.

Julian Maxey was 28. He had painted several hundred very unsuccessful pictures. Their merit, however, was plain-

ly recognized by his friends, by reason of which accomplishment he was called an artist. He was enabled to keep up this non lucrative pursuit and to satisfy the craving in his soul for counterfeiting the beautiful by a comfortable annuity which he had inherited from his grandmother.

Ellen Maxey was 24. Since the death of her parents she had held the proud though exacting position of her brother's housekeeper, than which there was only one other place in the world she would have been better satisfied to occupy.

On went the spirited horses, while the merry bells jingled and the steam spouted rhythmically in four evanescent streams from their nostrils, and the foot-falls beat time on the hard crust. The limitless black shadow settled down slowly over the sea and the land. There was a growing flush in the east which might herald a coming moon, and a fading glow in the west which betokened a departed sun, but these were but poor torches for a wayfarer groping in the dark, and the stars overhead, obscured by a pale mist, wore puny canopies against the obscuration of the deepening gloom.

On went the mettled span toward the faint light in the heavens made by the distant city, held up to their steady exit by a tight rein in the doctor's guiding hand and encouraged by an occasional stimulating cry. The ocean, stretching out from the base of the cliff into the darkness upon the right, grew more inky from moment to moment, and the fading white landscape upon the left became exceedingly sketchy and incomplete.

Still the four sporting clouds of steam and still the merry jingling of bells upon the frosty air.

All at once there is a break in the rhythm of the hoof beats. From a steady, onward, arrowlike flight the sleigh suddenly moves laterally and almost stops with terrific abruptness, narrowly escapes overturning, trembles, jerks, snaps in every joint and moves ahead again.

"Hi! whoa, there! What the deuce?"

Dr. Lamar was on his feet, and his strong arms were reining in the frightened horses. In another minute he was out in the snow, running beside them, clinging to the bridle. A plunge, a snort, a shiver, a great jingling of the bells, and the sleigh had come to a standstill.

"Whoa, Polly! Gently, Dolly!" said the doctor, persuasively stroking the noses of the trembling and greatly frightened animals, while his two companions, who had jumped into a snow bank, struggled into the road and began to pat themselves to rights.

"Now, what the deuce do you suppose made those horses shy so?"

"There is something back there on the road, I am very positive," said Maxey.

"And I—I thought I saw somebody jump over the fence and run across the field," added his sister.

"What you saw on the road were the old settees on the edge of the cliff probably," said Dr. Lamar. "You know the Somerset summer house is just back of us here, and in the warm weather there is a row of seats just above the bath-houses by the roadside. I noticed what I took to be the gangway leading down to the beach just before the horses jumped."

"No, no. What I saw was in the middle of the road," insisted the artist.

"But it's only a minute's work to find out." He turned back.

The doctor ejaculated: "Pshaw, what does it matter? We're wasting time!"

"No, I am sure there's something wrong!" exclaimed Miss Maxey.

"Wrong!" echoed the physician.

"What an idea! You surprise me, Miss Maxey. I didn't know you were so easily alarmed."

"I was right," called the voice of Maxey a little tremulously. "See this."

They dimly saw him standing in the road outlined against the sky, holding up a shapeless something to their view.

"What is it?"

"A woman's shawl."

Miss Maxey cried out in alarm: "We must go back at once. I know something is wrong. I felt it before we reached it."

"Absurd!" exclaimed the doctor.

But Miss Maxey did not wait to hear the comment. She had already rejoined her brother. The doctor saw them apparently kneeling in the snow, as though examining the surface. Then they separated. One went toward the fence which divided the road from the adjoining field, the other in the direction of the narrow strip of ground between it and the edge of the cliff.

"Dr. Lamar! Dr. Lamar!"

There was no mistaking the tenor of this cry or its impetuous nature. For the first time the physician felt a vague sensation of dread. He hastily made the horses fast to the fence and went back up the road. He saw that both figures had come together now on the other side of the wall near the edge of the bluff. He came up with quick steps.

"What's the matter? What is it?"

"Listen!"

The waves washed lonesomely on the rocks below. The night wind sighed in its dismal rounds. The breath of the listeners came quickly and audibly. There were no other sounds.

"I hear nothing," said the physician, "but the wash of the sea."

"Hut! What's that?"

A faint cry, rising on the wind, mysterious, indescribable!

"A child!" cried the doctor, "or a dog!"

"Whatever it be, it has fallen over the cliff," said Maxey.

His sister shuddered, but her voice was very calm. "You forget the foot-steps and the man I saw jump over the fence and run away. The snow is trodden and trampled all about us. There has been a struggle here where we are standing. I am afraid for what you are finding down there. Stay with me, Julian, and let the doctor go down."

The doctor went down, and in a little while he came back again.

"There is something caught on a point of rock between here and the

beach," he said hurriedly. "I could, by looking up, just see it between me and the sky—something which flutters in the wind. Maxey, you had better take Miss Ellen back to the sleigh. We need a rope and a lantern at once. I will return immediately."

No doubt of that, if he maintained the pace at which he set off.

Miss Maxey declined to go back to the sleigh.

"I am not a coward!" she said. "Something is suffering. Until it can be relieved, my duty is here. Hark, Julian! I hear it again!"

Yes, again and again and again ere the good doctor reappeared. It rose and fell like the pulsations on the beach below as the wind carried it, sometimes dying away into silence, sometimes welling up into loudness—a strange, foreboding sound to be listening to in a lonely place after dark. There was something unfamiliar—almost unearthly—about it that made its hearers shudder.

Part of that tale the tongue tells him not all.

There plenty of other signs which you may recognize for yourself. You only need to know what they mean.

A sense of weight and pain in the stomach chest and back after eating; headache; indigestion; a yellowish color of the eyes and skin; spots of dizziness; head hot and extremities cold had taste in the mouth and foul breath; weakness and languor; the gulping up of wind or gas; unnatural irritability and fretfulness; dry skin; loss of or variable appetite; bad dreams and broken sleep; constipation and irregularity of the bowels; flashes of heat and cold; aching of the back and limbs, etc.

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